



DECISION MEMORANDUM
CAL TRANS CULVERT REPLACEMENT ON HIGHWAY 70 PROJECT,
BUTTE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
FEATHER RIVER RANGER DISTRICT
PLUMAS NATIONAL FOREST
U.S. FOREST SERVICE

BACKGROUND

The California Department of Transportation (Cal Trans) has submitted a request for a temporary special use permit for construction of replacement drainage facilities on Highway 70. Activities would require temporary work areas outside the existing DOT Easement.

PROPOSED PROJECT NAME AND LOCATION

Cal Trans Culvert Replacement on Highway 70 project. PALS # 57274. California Highway 70. Post miles 41.89, 41.93, and 42.66, Butte County, California.

PROPOSED PROJECT ACTION AND DESCRIPTION

Post mile 41.89: the existing 30-inches by 75-feet culvert repaired, a concrete liner, CIPP lining, or MSWPVDED would be applied to the interior of the existing culvert. Debris accumulated at the upstream end will be cleared. No work is proposed at the inlet including the historical fieldstone flume and outlet. RSP to be installed at the outlet. The new length will be 86-feet. Post mile 41.93: the existing 24-inches by 41-feet culvert including its associated inlet and outlet to be replaced. The existing culvert will be replaced through cut and cover. A new headwall will be installed at the inlet. RSP installed at the outlet. Once constructed, the new culvert inlet will be at a higher elevation. The new length will be 36-feet. Post mile 42.66: the existing 30-inches by 113-feet culvert including its associated DI and outlet will be replaced by a new 36-inches culvert. The existing culvert will be abandoned, portions of the existing culvert that would conflict with the new one will be removed. The new culvert will be placed through cut and cover. The DI will be replaced in-kind. A new junction box will be placed where the new culvert turns and upstream of where the culvert becomes a down drain. The culvert outlet will be placed to drain to the existing outlet location using a 90-degree elbow. The new length will be 120-feet. Work to complete the replacement will impact the existing retaining wall.

PURPOSE OF ACTION

The culverts are past their useful life. Some are undersized and some will be placed with greater

lengths or at adjusted elevations to improve control of water flow.

NEED FOR ACTION

Reducing the risk of Highway 70 in Butte County being shut down due to culvert failure, reduces the cost of maintenance on the highway, improves the safety of the traveling public, prevents resource and property damage, and protects watersheds.

COLLABORATIVE INVOLVEMENT

This project was presented at the December 11, 2019 meeting of the Feather River Ranger District Collaborative and at the Butte County Forest Advisory Committee meeting on December 16, 2019.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was listed as a proposal on the Plumas National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA), PALS # 57274, on December 5, 2019, as well as the Forest Program of Work (POW). The project was updated and revised incorporating current project development design features, involving public input, using specific resource specialists for review and analysis.

ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

The project generated written input for amphibians.

RESULTS OF REVIEW AND ANALYSIS - FINDINGS

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species –
 - Perennial streams throughout this section of BUT 70 PM 41-48 should have outlets that are accessible to foothill yellow legged frogs (FYLF). Since the Camp Fire and associated mudslides have changed the landscape and smaller drainages so drastically, it is crucial that all outlets to perennial streams with pipe inlets/headwalls be improved upon. These improvements should provide access to frogs by making entrances to the outlets flush if possible. When possible, these areas outside of the outlets should provide passage with placement of rock looking as natural as possible by mimicking natural stream channels and implementing pools. However, in places where erosion is expected, or high flows

can carry rock downstream fairly easily, rock slope protection (RSP) in combination with poured concrete may be necessary for increased permanence. Other options include cutting pipe back further to use natural topography when possible. With increasingly less suitable habitat available to FYLF it is critical that passage is provided at these stream crossings.

- Cal Trans will perform a plant survey during the appropriate flowering period (April/May with possibly another survey in July) and will provide the Forest with the results. Any FS Sensitive or PNF Watch List plant species located during the survey will be avoided during project implementation. If impacts to such plants are unavoidable, mitigation measures will be developed by Cal Trans in consultation with the District botanist (e.g. transplanting and monitoring of affected plants), and implemented by Cal Trans.
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – No issues.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – None present.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – None present.
- Research natural areas – None present.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – There are no known American Indian religious sites within the project area.
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – The project area includes portions of rockwork that comprise the historic Feather River Highway which has been found to be Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. As designed the project will have no adverse effect to the Feather River Highway. No other cultural resources are located in the project area.
 - If during implementation of the project, it is determined that the historic rockwork associated with the historic Feather River Highway will be adversely affected by project work, all work will stop and Cal Trans shall notify the PNF Heritage Program Manager.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

As the responsible official, I am responsible for evaluating the effects of the project relative to the definition of significance established by the CEQ Regulations (40 CFR 1508.13). I have found that the Context and intensity of the analyzed resource areas do not meet the threshold nor the criteria for extraordinary circumstances or potential negative or significant effects in the area of potential effect.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Established by the Chief, this is one of a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and which have been found to

have no such effect in procedures adopted by the agency in implementation of regulations (40 CFR 1508.4).

DECISION

I have decided to approve the project and proposed action with the requirements, design features, best management practices, or mitigation measures listed in this Decision Memorandum.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions are identified as 36 CFR 220.6 (d)(8) approval, modification, or continuation of minor, short-term (1 year or less) special uses of NFS lands and 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(18) restoring wetlands, streams, riparian areas or other water bodies by removing, replacing, or modifying water control structures...to allow waters to flow into natural channels and floodplains and restore natural flow regimes to the extent practicable where valid existing rights or special use authorizations are not unilaterally altered or canceled. This category of action(s) is applicable because based on the Agency's experience and knowledge of regularly and routinely removing, replacing, or modifying water control structures as well as authorizing those activities to other agencies through special use authorizations, where there are no extraordinary circumstances, the responsible official can conclude the actions will not have significant effects.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. As amended by the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA).

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

This Decision does not provide for any "appeal" or "objection" opportunities. All public and stakeholder input was received and considered during the FRRD collaborative process for this project. Once this Decision is signed the project or proposed action may be implemented immediately, notwithstanding any other law or regulation from another agency that would preclude its immediate implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE AND REQUIREMENTS

This action may be implemented immediately following the delivery and discussion of the Regulatory Requirements, Best Management Practices (BMPs), Design Features, and/or Mitigation Measures required by this Decision Memorandum with those responsible for implementation. A notice of receipt or acknowledgement must be received by the Responsible Official or their designee and maintained with this Decision Memorandum prior to implementation and maintained until the project is complete and reviewed by District officials.



CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Erika Brenzovich, 530 283-7798, erika.brenzovich@usda.gov.

David B. Brillenz
District Ranger
Feather River Ranger District
Plumas National Forest

8 JAN 2020

Date

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